Past and Future Designs

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Past and Future Designs

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Post season 3, Will and Hannibal are starting their new life together as Will starts to come to terms with his sexuality after dreaming about Knights of the Round Table…

Notes

So, Hannibal (the evil fiend) has got me back into fandom. I've just finished writing my first fanfic in about 10 years. Hope you all enjoy!

Chapter 1

Bors had his woman, Lancelot had his many women. Tristan and Galahad had each other.

So long had the pair been inseparable that their brothers at arms could not recall a time when they were not one. Their intimacy and bond was an accepted part of the knight's lives. When one would appear from the other's quarters or they would ride off together to scout, no one thought much of it.

Tristan was glad of this. He was a stoic and mostly private person who would not have been comfortable with the same cries of triumph the knights would call to Lancelot on his returning from an evening in a woman's company. In private Tristan was everything to Galahad but in public he remained, what he would deem, appropriate. Even so there were the occasions when Tristan was glad to be able to steal a kiss or lay a hand on Galahad's thigh with no mention from the other knights.

Galahad lived for those moments. He respected the distance Tristan would sometimes put between them, he was as devoted as any of the other knights to their duty. Their evenings together and time alone were enough for him. Though he would admit to a thrill blazing through him whenever Tristan rode alongside him and leaned over to steal a kiss, a hand placed high on his thigh. Sometimes nothing more than a greeting, sometimes an invitation. He lived for those summer days when they would ride out together and lose themselves in the woods, and in each other. And the long winter evenings when they would retire early and keep each other warm on a bed of blankets and furs in front of a roaring fire.

Neither of them took for granted their time together. Knowing each battle might be their last. Neither discussed what would happen when they were finally discharged of their service and free to return to a home they could barely remember. They dared not make those plans for fear of never being able to live them. Instead they stole time together and lived in those moments. They would live in those moments forever.

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Will woke suddenly, unsure at first what had woken him. It wasn't the dream, if it were a dream - it felt so real that it could almost be a memory. It had been a long time since a dream had woken him, usually in a bed of his own sweat with fear running through him. His mind was clear of those dreams now, it had been since the night they had escaped.

He pondered the thought for a moment - escaped. Yes, that's what they had done. There was no place for either of them in their old lives. Hannibal would have been back in a cell or dead, Will… he wasn't sure. He belonged in a cell too, he knew that. He knew he wouldn't have been back with Molly and Walter - circumstances leading up to that night on the bluff had seen to that. He had made his peace with it the night they killed Dolarhyde. He had made his peace with what he was - what Hannibal had seen in him from their first meeting and had tried to show him, even if not always in the most appropriate ways. But he had been right,

Will had to hold on to that because that was what allowed him to forgive Hannibal. To keep forgiving Hannibal.

There was a noise, a thump. Will wondered if that's what had woken him before. He rose from his bed and went to the door, knowing the thump came from the next room - Hannibal's room. He let himself in quietly and could see in the faint light that Hannibal was still asleep but fitful. His brow glistened and his sheets were twisted around him - Will knew well how that felt. As he watched a moment longer he was struck by the resemblance between Hannibal and one of the men from his dream. He shook his head and tried to push the dream down. It was still so fresh it felt real and he knew it was one of those dreams that would play on his mind throughout the day. At least this had been a pleasant dream, not one of blood and gore.

Another thump and Will saw that Hannibal had struck out, his arm hitting against and rocking the bedside table, but he didn't stir. Will moved over to the bed, a sort of awkwardness coming over him at being so close to a prone and vulnerable Hannibal. In the past he would have been tempted to kill the man, but now things had changed and he understood Hannibal. And he knew Hannibal understood him in a way no one else ever had or possible could. Even so, he was still far from comforting him, not least because he had always been better with animals than with humans. There was still a gulf between them that was born of their situation. Hannibal had pulled them from the water. Will had still been numb to it all as he made their plans, bound their wounds ever so tenderly. They had hardly spoken as Will had tried to decide whether he had hoped for death when he had pulled them over the cliff. He hadn't even been sure in that moment. He had gone with Hannibal to this hideout he had already planned for future eventualities. He had nowhere else to go. The FBI wouldn't take him back, nor did he want them to - he was done being Jack's puppet. There was no going back to his family, if they had ever been that. He had wanted them to be, he had even been happy in many ways, but he had been caged and haunted in a way that Hannibal had now freed him from. He loved Molly and Walter but they were better off without him and they were not really what he needed - he could admit that to himself now.

Hannibal loved him, this he knew. Hannibal was part of him and they would be forever linked - conjoined. But Will wasn't sure he could ever feel the same way Hannibal did. They had shared an intimacy on the bluff when they had taken down Dolarhyde, a brief moment where the proceeding years of gentle flirting that Will wasn't sure had always been acting on his part, seemed to bloom. He had a sort of love for Hannibal, a knowledge that he needed him and a sense of loss when he wasn't around, but for him it wasn't a romantic or sexual love. There was a curiosity for him, in those moments of intimacy, that made him wonder what might happen if those moments had lasted longer, but that hadn't happened. They had never reached that point and often through his own hesitation. The weeks had passed and Hannibal had never pushed, never even hinted at his feelings - he seemed content just to have Will with him. Even as Will worked through the emotional upheaval he had been through, sullen and world weary, Hannibal seemed content to just have him there. He knew if Will wasn't in the small house he was walking in the woods, he knew he would always come back. Hannibal never offered to listen, to be his therapist, and Will was glad of that because he needed to work through this on his own. Come to terms with the events of weeks and years past.

As Will reached his side, Hannibal struck out again but this time Will gently stopped his arm from hitting the table and placed it back at his side on the bed. The feel of his skin, the taut muscles beneath recalled in Will some of his dream. The knights that weren't he and Hannibal - the tight strength of the reserved older man and his younger more carefree companion. Will wasn't sure he had ever been carefree like that man. He wished he had been, he wished he could be. He certainly felt lighter, less troubled since their escape, but he was still far from carefree. And yet he knew he could be. He knew, given time and healing, he could be the kind of happy he had pretended to be with Molly.

"Will?" Hannibal's voice was hoarse as he tried to fix his eyes on Will in the darkness of the room. It was only this that made Will realise his hand was still gently placed on Hannibal's arm. Before he could remove it, Hannibal had placed his other hand over the top.

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"I had a bad dream." Hannibal said quickly. He wanted a reason to keep hold of Will's hand as long as he would allow. In truth he wanted to pull Will closer, to embrace him and be comforted, but he wouldn't make Will uncomfortable. They had so much time ahead of them, he didn't need to rush Will despite his own wants and needs. "Dolarhyde got the better of us again." He said as Will slipped his hand from his. The same nightmare he had frequently, and by us he had meant Will. He looked up at Will, able to make out his face, a bandage still on his cheek from the wound Hannibal kept imagining he had not survived. Each night brought different dreams of how Will actually died - one of the wounds inflicted by Dolarhyde, or the fall from the cliff, drowning, gunshots from arresting FBI. Each time Hannibal felt hollow and was relieved to find Will alive in the morning in the kitchen as they ate a silent breakfast. He had never before woke in the night to find Will in his room, but the relief was overwhelming.

"Everything's fine, you should go back to sleep." Will told him and began back to the door.

"Will, I… Would you stay with me? Please refuse if you prefer, but I feel I would sleep better with you here." Hannibal asked hopefully, though he tried to keep his tone blasé. Will hesitated for a moment and then surprised Hannibal by moving to the other side of the bed and laying down on the covers. Side by side, on his back, wordlessly staring at the ceiling. Hannibal hid his delight and tried to focus his mind on something other than the man at his side. Perhaps he had been deeply wrong in thinking that Will being by his side would help him sleep. "Did you also have a bad dream?" He asked, concern edging his words. Will seemed to have escaped the nightmares he had once known, so their return would be unwelcome and concerning.

"No, I was dreaming about knights." A short, unrestrained laugh escaped from Will's lips, sending a shock of joy through Hannibal. It was a sound he had not heard in a long while. "We were knights of the round table and… we were happy. We rode and hunted and, everything was a lot more simple."

"Things can be as simple as we make them." Hannibal commented before realising he was slipping into therapist mode. "I'm glad it was a good dream. Did we laugh together?"

"Yes. We were happy." Will repeated and Hannibal could hear his smile.

“I’m glad. Maybe we can have some of that happiness in this life too.” Hannibal replied but Will was quiet. Perhaps he had fallen asleep, he wasn’t sure, but he took the silence as a cue and closed his eyes.

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Will stared at the ceiling and listened to Hannibal’s rhythmic breathing as the man beside him slowly fell back to sleep. Will’s mind kept wandering to his dream, maybe that’s why he had stayed when Hannibal asked, he wasn’t sure. The two men so like them in many ways, not in others. He let flashes of the dream into the fore of his mind. Riding, hunting, fighting, fucking. But really, that word was too vulgar for these men. Whether rough or gentle it was love making. Will felt a stir in his loins, an unexpected arousal. He was tempted to push the thoughts of the dream back down, but found he didn’t want to. A flash of the knights, a passionate kiss turning slow and gentle, a caress as the Hannibal-like Tristan ran his hand up Will's, no, Galahad’s thigh. Will shuddered as a shiver of pleasure went through him.

The feelings didn’t confuse him, but they were foreign to him. He had always had a feel for Hannibal’s sexuality - he had always presumed that the doctor didn’t desire a gender so much as a person. He had realised it to be true without Hannibal ever saying anything. Hannibal was attracted to the person regardless of gender, and Will thought he would never understand that. He had never thought himself sexually attracted to men and had never really had cause to consider it.

Another flash of his dream - Tristan gently thrusting into Galahad as they both moaned with pleasure - and Will wondered if he might think like Hannibal. If their bond, their feelings for each other, could form a sexual attraction. He half-smiled to himself as he realised that his heavy erection at the thought of these men who could be he and Hannibal might just attest that he could find pleasure with a man.

He looked over at his companion, now sleeping soundly. In the darkness he could make out his face, peaceful now. His upper body was uncovered, the sheets wrapped around him at the waist. Will, rolled slightly, reached a hand out without thinking and withdrew it before touching flesh. He looked at Hannibal’s side, where the bullet had entered the bandage was gone but the scar was still raw. He moved his hand closer again and could feel the heat of the wound. He placed his hand on Hannibal’s side, just below the scar and gently, lightly, ran his fingers across Hannibal’s downy stomach. Will felt another shiver go through him and instantly withdrew, laying back and resuming his staring at the ceiling. He tried to slow his breathing, now betraying his desire, and tried even harder to ignore the throbbing ache between his legs.

A few minutes passed and Will’s attempts to curb his arousal suffered at the onslaught of more flashes from his dream, unable to keep them at bay. He was considering getting up and going to the bathroom - a cold shower, or maybe… He stifled a groan.

A hand reached across slowly and gently, quietly, and lay on Will’s stomach. On his scar. Fingers drew lightly across it and his breath caught in his throat. He felt Hannibal move beside him but continued to stare at the ceiling, his heart pounding in his chest. The hand was replaced by lips, brushing softly over the once torn skin that bound them together, as the hand

slowly moved south. Will shuddered and struggled to keep his hips settled as he willed the hand lower.

A slight pause. “Is this ok Will?” Hannibal’s voice was gentle but raspy.

Will nodded. “Yes.” his own voice alien and dry. He needed Hannibal to continue before he changed his mind, before he was able to hesitate again. That impulse was there, an impulse to deny his feelings and protest his sexuality. But he didn’t want to, he wanted to be like Hannibal, he wanted to allow himself the attraction.

Will drew a shaky breath as Hannibal laid a kiss on his scar at the same time as his hand slipped deftly under the fabric of Will’s shorts and fell lightly on his length, which twitched in response. Will let out an involuntary moan and felt Hannibal’s lips smile against him. Hannibal’s hand caressed his cock, feeling it, seeing it with his hand - getting to know him intimately. Once acquainted, Hannibal wrapped his fingers gently around his cock and began to stroke. Will shuddered again, Hannibal’s mouth working its way up his torso and chest as his hand worked Will’s cock. A slight hesitation and Hannibal’s lips finally sought Wills.

Will accepted the light kiss, it was almost chaste. He waited for the lips to return, and when they did he devoured them hungrily. The feel of Hannibal’s light stubble aroused him further rather than deterred him as he thought it might. He slipped his tongue into Hannibal’s mouth, eliciting a moan from the doctor that made Will's cock twitch again.

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Hannibal moved his free hand up into Will's soft hair, his eyes closed in bliss - a shiver of joy radiating through him. He was surprised when Will’s hands came up from his sides, one hooking up behind him and pressing Hannibal to him, the other moving into Hannibal’s hair. Hannibal could barely breath, between the kissing and his breath catching in his throat.

He was caught off guard. He had felt in control when he had started touching Will, but now his hand left Will’s cock and raised to hook under Will’s arm and grip his shoulder allowing Will to pull them into the tight embrace he had initiated. Hannibal moaned as his own unsatiated erection was pushed hard against Will’s thigh. All the while he welcomed Will’s hungrily passionate kisses. His heart began thumping. A slightly unusual sensation. His heart never raced, not even when killing. But of course it would now, of course it would with Will.

Will finally eased off, panting as he relaxed his embrace and released Hannibal’s mouth. He seemed exhausted by his passion, which Hannibal could understand, his own passion had been pent up for so long that he was barely in control of himself now that this window had opened. But he kept tight hold of that control for Will’s sake. He was still fragile and he had to be willing to accept whatever Will would be happy to give and not push him for fear of breaking him.

Will’s hands were still on him - one in his hair, one behind his back - though the forceful grip he had had, was replaced by a gentle caress that sent a shiver of delight through Hannibal. A hand softly stroking his back, the other playing in his hair. The actions of someone familiarising themselves with their new lover. It was a strange thought considering how

intimately they already knew each other, they were so close and yet had never touched in this way.

Hannibal drew back slightly, allowing a space between them that he wanted to fill with words but knew better. The sun was starting to come up and they could see each other a little more clearly, he could see Will was studying his face in the silence. The hand in Hannibal's hair came down and stroked his cheek. Hannibal leaned in for another gentle kiss as he moved his hand back down to Will's still hard cock. His sleep shorts were still in the way of any serious intent. Hannibal hesitated for a moment before pulling out of Will's arms with no protest. He moved down the bed and gently slid the shorts down to Will's thighs.

Hannibal enjoyed the sound of Will's subtle changes in breathing, not quite a gasp, as he was exposed. Hannibal looked down in the partial light starting to come through the curtains. His mouth watered at the sight before him. He wanted to devour Will, he always had. He almost had once and he knew he would have regretted it forever. He knew better now. He wanted to taste Will, to keep tasting him. He bowed down and placed his tongue at the base of Will's shaft, running it up the length to the tip, a flavour he would savour.

"Yes…" Will's cracked voice broke the silence as his hand reached down into Hannibal's hair, and the other gripped at the bedsheets. Hannibal took that as all the consent and encouragement he needed. He ran his tongue up Will's length once more before circling it over the tip, and then taking him into his mouth. Hannibal shifted slightly, getting comfortable as he reached a hand to Will's balls, caressing them gently before moving up to the base of his shaft. His mouth and tongue continued to work Will's cock whilst his hand massaged the base of Will's shaft.

Will moaned in appreciation, gripping tightly to both the sheets and Hannibal's hair. Hannibal smiled against Will's cock. He knew well how to please a man, he knew what he had enjoyed himself and what others had enjoyed from him, but never had it been so pleasing to him before. This only served to make Hannibal more enthusiastic in his actions. He used his tongue to alternate between circling the tip of Will's cock and massaging his shaft as his mouth worked up and down, taking in as much of Will as he could.

"Fuck!" Will exclaimed. "Fuck, yes!". Hannibal felt Will tense and anticipated the release, which he welcomed. Will's cock throbbed inside Hannibal's mouth, but Hannibal didn't stop sucking until Will came hard into his mouth.

As Will's body relaxed, seemingly melting into the sheets, Hannibal moved back up the bed wiping his mouth with the back of his hand to catch the last of Will's excellent vintage. By the time he lay next to his new lover, Will's eyes were heavy with the stupor of sex and sleep.

"Are you ok Will?" Hannibal asked, hoping he hadn't pushed too far for one night. Will opened his eyes and looked at him, a slight smile on his lips. Hannibal was pleasantly surprised that the look took his breath away, his heart thumping again.

Will let actions speak for him as he started running his hand down Hannibal's side. He hesitated slightly the lower it got and then tentatively, moved his hand to Hannibal's cock, nestled in his silk pajama bottoms now damp with precum. Hannibal closed his eyes and swallowed before finally taking Will's hand and moving it away and up to his chest.

“We have time for that.” Hannibal said. “We have so much time to discover each other.” Hannibal told his lover. He was desperate for Will’s touch, but he didn’t want Will to continue with lack of sleep. He didn’t want Will to wake in the morning with regret. They had time, he had to keep reminding himself, they had all the time ahead of them now they were free and together.

Will looked for a moment like he might protest but then smiled that slight smile again, that tired smile, and nodded. He kicked off his shorts and pulled the covers up to his waist before letting his eyes close for a moment. Hannibal was still watching him, and once he settled he was about to lay back down himself. But Will’s eyes opened and he moved up quickly and took another kiss from Hannibal’s lips before settling back against the pillow.

“Thank you” Will near whispered as his eyes closed again.

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Will woke slowly, the room was quite light, the sun had been up for a while and the curtains struggled to hold it back. He lay on his side looking at the wall. It took him a moment to get his bearings, he wasn’t in his own bed and a heavy arm was wrapped around him, a firm body pressed to his back. Hannibal.

Memories of the previous night flooded into him, they seemed different in the daylight - more real. He felt the usual hesitation creep in, the same hesitation that held him back before. He struggled with himself a moment and wondered if he would’ve got up and left the room if he could do so without waking Hannibal.

Will was just trying to organise the thoughts and emotions coursing through him when he felt something. Nestled almost exactly along the crack of his buttocks he felt Hannibal growing hard. Despite the hesitations he thought his mind would, but didn’t, bring up, he felt his own body respond with a mutual arousal. He remembered Hannibal’s mouth on him and he didn’t regret it. He let go of thoughts of his presumed sexuality. Hannibal made him feel something he hadn’t in a long while, he didn’t want it to matter that he was a man, and last night had showed that it didn’t need to. They could take it slow, as Hannibal had said, discover each other in this new way. He equally knew that Hannibal would let him go as slow as he needed.

He bit down on his lower lip as he felt Hannibal stir, the man’s arm tightening around him and his body pressing closer to him. Hannibal’s hot breath on his neck made his hairs stand up on end and his skin tingle. He found himself wanting Hannibal to press his lips against his neck. Instead, Hannibal leaned over and whispered in his ear - “Will you tell me more about those knights?”

Past and Future Designs: The Next Step

Chapter Summary

Will continues to dream of the knights of the round table as his relationship with Hannibal takes further steps into the physical...

Chapter Notes

Thanks for the kudos and feedback on the last chapter!! I have chapters 3 and 4 almost ready to go but going to save them until closer to Christmas as they are set around Christmas time :)

Tristan lay in front of the roaring fire, his bare skin baking despite the cold outside. The feel of the fur under him added to his general feeling of warmth and comfort as he waited for Galahad to return with more wood to ensure the fire through the night. When the door opened the cold blew across him, his hair standing up from the roots, he looked over to his lover as he dropped the wood into the basket at the door. The door swung closed and Tristan had to smirk at the sight of Galahad - wrapped up in a thick coat, snow coating him lightly. The sight was all the more amusing for the knowledge that beneath the coat he was naked other than his sandals. Under Tristan's amused gaze the coat and sandals were quickly discarded and Galahad joined him by the fire.

With soft words and softer eyes Tristan invited his lover to come and get warm at his side. Galahad responded with a smile and promptly moving to the fire, dropped down to the furs and snuggled into the crook of Tristan's waiting arms. Tristan, a little concerned with the chill on Galahad's skin, began lacing kisses on his younger lover. First lightly on his lips, then along his bearded jaw, down to his collar bone. Galahad rolled onto his back falling slightly from Tristan's arms so that he might continue with his kisses, which he freely did. His lips warmed Galahad as they worked their way down his quivering body. Making his way to Galahad's crotch he placed a trail of kisses along his hips before running his tongue up Galahad's length then circling it over the tip and taking him into his mouth.

Galahad moaned.

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Will woke, his mouth dry and a heavy, throbbing ache between his legs as his mind tried to separate he and Hannibal from Tristan and Galahad.

It became an unspoken arrangement that Will spent most nights in Hannibal's bed. Not every night, as he sometimes needed his space and Hannibal never mentioned this but accepted it, and him, either way. Although every morning in Hannibal's bed he'd wake up curled in Hannibal's arms or vice versa, they didn't immediately revisit the intimacy of that first night he'd dreamt of the knights. Though they revisited his dreams often. Will was sure Hannibal wanted to, and in many ways he did too, but he had wanted to take it slow. He felt like an awkward virgin confronted with a much more experienced lover. He wanted to be open to trying new things - some of which he'd seen in his dreams of the knights - but at the same time he was intimidated. Hannibal seemed guided by his pace and at the most might sleepily nuzzle into him as they lay in bed, and he seemed content with this. In fact Hannibal seemed more relaxed than he had ever known him, he seemed at peace in many ways. They had not yet broached the subject of resuming murderous ways and Will was glad of it. He may have accepted this new side of himself but he was still coming to terms with it and for now his relationship with Hannibal, whatever that might be, was the focus. In many ways they had been thrown together after their escape and now they needed to work out how they fit together for the future - living together, on the run together, loving each other. Murder was at the bottom of the list it felt so far.

It was strange to Will - in their old lives there was little that went unspoken between them, and yet now he felt self-conscious and couldn't quite brave telling Hannibal why he was hesitant after having been accepting of Hannibal's sexual attention previously. Hannibal probably assumed it was his usual hesitancy, of which he had become used to, and Will had no idea how to broach the subject or even if he wanted to. He felt too embarrassed to explain to Hannibal how self-conscious he felt over his lack of experience. How intimidated he was by the thoughts in his own head, put there by dreams of knights that could be himself and Hannibal, that he had no idea how to act on. He didn't want to have to explain to Hannibal that he was worried he would be a disappointment to him, that his inexperience would change things between them.

On this morning Will was up and dressed, and stood looking out the kitchen window when Hannibal came down from the shower. His dream had woken him and left his skin tingling, he felt almost awkward being in Hannibal's bed and not acting the thoughts his dream had awoken. Hannibal was wearing a towel around the waist and immediately sought the coffee pot. Will noted his reflection in the window and gave a slight smile at his appearance. Always nicely turned out and groomed, he had noticed Hannibal had taken to hanging around in his towel, or sometimes coming down to breakfast in just his silk pajama pants. Will was pretty sure it was an effort to get Will used to relaxing around a half-naked Hannibal, or perhaps even entice him. Though he was equally sure that if he raised it with Hannibal he would likely make some excuse about now being a gentleman of leisure.

"Good morning Will." Hannibal smiled. Will had snuck out from under Hannibal's arm before he had awoken and now felt sheepish. Will faced Hannibal and returned the smile. He let his eyes momentarily wander over Hannibal's downy chest and stomach, his mouth going dry. Since that night he had found a sexual appreciation of, and attraction to, Hannibal and it made him ache that he couldn't bring himself to act on it.

"We need to get you some new clothes." Hannibal commented as he leaned back against the counter, coffee in hand. He wasn't wrong. They had picked a few up on their way to the

secluded safe house, and Will had also made use of a few of Hannibal's sweaters from the large wardrobe he had already stocked for himself here. Currently Will was wearing one of the sweaters, not quite as well fitted as it could be on his own form.

"Doesn't look quite as smart on me as it does on you." Will replied with a smile. "I guess you'll want me to start looking a bit smarter, less scruffy." Will knew the money for clothes would come from one of Hannibal's secreted funds, and he couldn't help but wonder if he'd just end up as some sort of Hannibal mannequin. He liked Hannibal's clothes - on Hannibal - but he wouldn't really be in a position to argue over what would essentially be gifts.

Hannibal's eyebrows knit together. "Smarter? I'd like you to have clothes that don't look like you've out worn them or borrowed from someone else. But smarter? You mean, you mean more elegant?" A little wry smile as he sipped more coffee. "Why would I dress you like me Will?" Hannibal seemed genuinely confused.

"I thought that would be more your taste…"

Hannibal let out a chuckle. "You're my taste Will. No matter what you're wearing. My compassion for you was sealed whilst you were wearing a flannel shirt - why would I want you in anything else? I want you to be you Will."

Will was slightly taken aback. He hadn't really thought of it that way, he had only thought of Hannibal's taste for the exquisite - a word he would never use to describe himself. He imagined that given half the chance, Hannibal would have him in three piece suits and polished shoes. He had just assumed that aesthetically he was not to Hannibal's taste. But of course that couldn't be the case, as Hannibal acknowledged. He knew Hannibal had started to love him years ago, and he had loved him for all of him just as he loved Hannibal for all of Hannibal. Not that either of them had been so bold as to voice their love in so direct a manner.

"Whatever clothes you chose they will be suitable, and no doubt practical, and of course, on you, completely exquisite." Hannibal smiled and Will wondered if he'd plucked the word from his mind. Exquisite.

Will felt an impulse to kiss Hannibal and so acted on it. Feeling a little overwhelmed by Hannibal's words, feeling the love behind them, he strode the few short steps across the kitchen and snaked his hand up into Hannibal's hair and pulled him into a kiss. The coffee spilling slightly between them.

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Hannibal managed to dispose of the coffee cup onto the countertop behind him so that he could reciprocate the unexpected and very welcome kiss. Not wanting to seem forceful, wanting Will to lead this dance, he hesitated for a moment to place his hands. He wanted to envelope Will in his arms, take control, but instead he settled for gripping onto the sweater on either side of Will's waist.

As their tongues played over each other, the kissing became less urgent but more intimate. Hannibal clenched his fists at Will's sides even tighter as both Will's hands ran into his hair.

Their bodies pressed naturally together, he could feel Will's arousal as much as he knew Will could feel his. He moaned into Will's mouth, in part from the strain of holding back.

As with every day since their escape, he had to remind himself that he had to give Will the space to make his own decisions, to pursue his own wants and needs with no influence from Hannibal. He had influenced Will enough in the past - all for his own good, all to bring out the true Will. But that Will existed in the world now, hatched from his chrysalis. He was no longer Hannibal's to shape and influence. Fighting his desire to do so was a daily struggle. He had only ever wanted Will to understand what he was, what they both were, he didn't want to force Will to love him regardless of how deep his own feelings went. He already knew Will had told him many times that he loved him, but as when Hannibal said it to him, those exact words were never uttered. Hannibal had substituted words for a long time in order to allow Will to feel comfortable, but he knew that they were understood. He believed Will did the same, whether he was totally conscious of it or not. But then, actions spoke louder than words he reminded himself as Will kissed him hungrily.

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Will pulled back from the kiss, breathing heavily, his eyes down. He couldn't look at Hannibal because he knew he'd lose his nerve if he did. With one hand caressing the back of Hannibal's neck, the other slowly traced its way down to Hannibal's chest. With a stolen glance, he noticed Hannibal was also looking down, following the path of his hand as his breath too came in ragged bursts. He could feel Hannibal's heart thumping beneath his hand and found that he was pleasantly surprised at the reaction. Not a lot made this man's pulse quicken.

His hand continued to Hannibal's stomach, drawing deeper breaths and a quivering from Hannibal to which he couldn't help but let out a gentle laugh before bringing his head back up to catch Hannibal's mouth with his once more. He suddenly felt confident - knowing that what he was doing was pleasing to Hannibal made it easier. He also had a plan, a prompt from one of his dreams, that he had awoken from thinking I could do that. He reached his hand down to the towel knowing that he wanted to pleasure Hannibal and confident that he could - after all he given himself plenty of hand jobs.

Will rubbed his hand over the protrusion in the towel. Hannibal's breath catching again with a moan as he arched his back - pushing his erection against Will's hand. Will nibbled at Hannibal's lower lip and slid his hand to the the top of the towel, he tugged it and it fell to the floor. He was surprised and turned on by the grunt that escaped Hannibal's lips in response. Hannibal still held tight to his sweater, almost too tight, Will knew this was Hannibal reining himself in. Even so, he was happy to let Hannibal take some control as his mouth hungrily devoured Will's.

The kissing only became more passionate as Will's hand took hold of Hannibal's painfully hard cock. He rubbed his thumb over the tip, using the pre-cum as a natural lubricant before sliding his hand down to get a feel for the man - the same way Hannibal had acquainted himself with Will when they'd previously been intimate. He took in the differences in shape and size from his own, such an alien but arousing process.

Hannibal pulled back from the kissing, his head lolling back as his teeth clamped down onto his lower lip. Will let his lips find Hannibal's collar bone and smiled against the now clammy skin, an immense feeling of satisfaction that even his slightest touch was so pleasurable to Hannibal. Even so he was unable to get the kind of hold he wanted at this angle, the kind he was used to when he pleasured himself. Will hooked his free hand around Hannibal's hips and gently guided them, which Hannibal allowed, until Hannibal was facing the countertop. His hands had left Will and instead balled into fists on the countertop as he leaned forward, allowing enough room for Will's hand to continue his ministration. With the better angle Will felt even more confident. He began working Hannibal's cock the way he liked to pleasure himself, his free arm snaked around Hannibal's waist to pull him tight to him. Will's hard cock pressed through his trousers and up against Hannibal's exposed ass - he had to resist the urge to grind against him, concentrating instead on Hannibal's cock.

Will let his lips rest on Hannibal's back, feeling the taut and straining muscles beneath, as he laced light kisses onto his lover.

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Hannibal's throat was so dry that even groans got stuck in it. Will's hand felt so good around his cock. He hadn't woke this morning thinking that today might be any different than the other - that they might take another step in intimacy. More that he woke every day hopeful that it might be, hopeful that Will might be less hesitant and act on the feelings he clearly had. Act on the lingering looks and soft eyes he gave Hannibal and probably didn't even realise. He was surprised that all it took was an acknowledgement to Will that he didn't want to change him. He had only wanted to free him, which he had now accomplished, everything else was pure Will - the scruffy aesthetic, the love of fishing, the soft spot for strays - he loved it all. It was what made him Will.

His thoughts were broken by Will's thumb once more rubbing over the tip of his cock, now unbelievably sensitive that he couldn't help but grunt as he bit down on his lower lip. Instinctively he pushed back into Will's crotch, grinding against his hard cock as Will panted against his back. Hannibal was so turned on he knew he couldn't last long, and as Will's hand began pumping him again he let out a moan.

"Will…" Hannibal panted between moans. "So...so close…" his voice came out broken, but Will had understood. Will's free hand moved down to Hannibal's hip and gripped it tightly, grinding his crotch into Hannibal's ass as he quickened the strokes - working his hand up and down Hannibal's throbbing shaft.

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Will's hand ached but he couldn't even think about it. He just felt his own cock twitch almost painfully at Hannibal's words, and felt his own desire for Hannibal to cum. He needed it almost as much as his own release - the first step in his own education on how to please man. He even found himself struggling with the desire to turn Hannibal and drop to his knees, to take him into his mouth. But he had hesitated too long over the thought and now it was too late. He could feel Hannibal's cock tighten, his whole body tense and a deep groan escape from his lips. Will continued to pump, easing off slightly as Hannibal's body started to relax

and he felt the cum work it's way through Hannibal's cock and out onto his hand, flowing over his grip.

"Will…" Hannibal breathed the word as he leaned more of his weight against the counter. Will left his hand on Hannibal's now softening cock, his open mouth panting against Hannibal's back. He was distracted by his own painfully hard cock. "Will… that was… unexpected… and beautiful." Will could tell from the shape of the words that Hannibal was smiling as he said it. Will returned the smile, his lips still at Hannibal's back as neither of them had the energy or inclination to immediately move. Their panting almost in unison as they tried to recover themselves.

Hannibal turned slowly in Will's arms, Will's lips dragged across his skin until he was panting into the man's shoulder. His soiled hand resting on Hannibal's hip, his other falling behind Hannibal and on to the counter, leaning into him. Hannibal hooked a finger under Will's chin and lifted his face, lightly lacing kisses along his bearded jaw in a way that made Will remember his dream and quiver.

Hannibal took this as a cue and lowered his hand to Will's crotch - his stiff cock pressing tight against his trousers. Will moaned as Hannibal pressed his hand hard against his cock and began to rub.

"Shall I help with this Will?" Hannibal asked, gently but with a hint of mischief he clearly could not conceal. Will bit his lower lip and nodded without any words. Hannibal didn't hesitate, continuing rub through the material of his trousers. Will thought for a moment he was going to undo the trousers, but instead he continued to work Will's cock through the material - an odd sensation of distance and friction combined. Hannibal's lips found a tender spot on his neck and placed nipping kisses. Will could feel how hard he was holding himself back as though he wanted to sink his teeth into Will, and couldn't help but moan in response. This deadly man was trying so hard not to hurt him physically or emotionally, ever since their escape he had given Will space despite his own needs. He could imagine how really Hannibal just wanted to tear off his clothes and devour him. His memory flashed back to that night when Hannibal had worked his tongue so expertly over his cock. Will was torn between wanting Hannibal to continue his current actions and wanting to remove his trousers. But the thought lasted a very short moment as he was suddenly overcome with a wave of pleasure. Hannibal's hand continued to massage his cock as he came suddenly and hard into his trousers.

"Fuck!" Will leaned hard into Hannibal, trying not to collapse under suddenly weakened legs.

"You do need more clothes now." Hannibal smirked. "And I think I need another shower." Hannibal muttered into his hair. "Care to join me?"

Will shuddered with pleasure.

Past and Future Designs: Early Christmas Present

Chapter Summary

Hannibal gives Will a gift and Will summons up the courage to take their sexual relationship to the next level...

Chapter Notes

I know that some people seem to have a real issue with Bottom!Hannibal. If that is the case you'll want to skip the end of this chapter. That said, I hope you don't because this is all about how I see the progression of their sexual relationship and what rings true for me in my head for them. Also, you'll definitely want to come back for the final chapter as there will be a switcheroo.

Hoping to put up the final chapter as close to Christmas Day as possible as that is when it is set. See you then :D

Galahad woke under the furs they had pulled onto the bed to ward off the cold of the winter night outside. If anything now he was too hot, with Tristan's warm naked body spooned up against his own he could feel that they were both clammy with sweat. With as little movement as possible so as not to wake his lover, Galahad pushed the furs off the bed, leaving them with only a blanket and each other's warmth. Despite his efforts, Tristan stirred next to him, pulling him tighter into his arms as Galahad felt him slowly harden, his arousal apparent against him. Galahad found himself aroused as a response and welcomed the gentle kisses his sleepy lover laced across the back of his neck.

Tristan's hand reached down to Galahad's cock and began to caress him lazily, quickly bringing him to full hardness. Galahad moaned, part in response and part as discouragement, muttering something about needing sleep for the day ahead. Tristan countered that it was already morning and this would be the best way to start the day. A difficult position to argue against. When Galahad could not in fact counter the argument he leaned back into Tristan, turning his head to allow his lover to lean in for a kiss as he continued to work his now throbbing cock.

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Will woke with his body pressed tight against Hannibal’s. His arm was curled around his lover, and he proceeded to pull him closer with his first waking breath. His dream still fresh in his mind, he felt his morning arousal stir. Hannibal stirred too and turned over, ending on

his back as Will half moved over him, opening his eyes to see Will studying his face. Will returned Hannibal's involuntary smile before placing a light kiss on his lips.

"Good morning." Hannibal muttered as he drew a hand up and into Will's hair.

"Morning." Will returned. There was an easiness about their relationship that made waking together feel satisfying - something Will might never have imagined in the past. After they had begun to be intimate with each other it had taken them to another stage, another level. Will slept in Hannibal's bed every night now and noted that Hannibal had taken to referring to it as our room, our bed. Will still had his room, mostly full of fishing tackle and books - a space for his things other than his body. That belonged with Hannibal. They pleasured each other and were satisfied, even so they hadn't gone as far as Will desired. Hannibal was still letting him set the pace and he was still working up his nerve to try things he had seen his dreams and longed to try with no idea how to approach it.

Even so, he was content, and felt that Hannibal was too. His new intimacy with Hannibal had helped him process everything that had come before. Maybe he had wanted to kill them when he pulled Hannibal over the cliff, at the least he had wanted an ending. But he had not imagined a new beginning. Maybe if he had wanted to kill them it was in part because he couldn't imagine a future, but it turns out Hannibal had imagined it for him and it wasn't what he had expected. He could have imagined an unsettled life of crime and horror - something he still wasn't quite ready for despite discovering what was within the night they killed Dolarhyde. Instead Hannibal gave him what he said he always would - a place for him. The secluded house in which they lived was surrounded by woods and a river, it reminded him of his own house though decorated much more to Hannibal's tastes. They barely left other than for essential shopping in the small local town. They were close to the Canadian border, and Will knew it was unlikely they would stay there for a long time, Hannibal had other places they could go, but travelling would be difficult and he was sure their would-be captures would be looking to Europe. Hannibal was adept at disappearing and Will trusted that he was right keeping them in the States until they could move across borders with more ease - borders that Jack and his team were already searching beyond. The FBI and Interpol would not be looking for them in this little backwater where Hannibal had set up a safe house quite some years previous.

They had not discussed killing, instead Hannibal's focus seemed to be on creating a home for them. Keeping their heads down and enjoying the seclusion until the time was right to move on. Will had started to accept that - this was his family now, Hannibal was his family. It had taken him a long time to move on from his previous life, even longer to realise that he desperately wanted to. He was glad not to be at crime scenes, he was happy to acknowledge the darkness within himself, but this had all taken a long time for him to resolve.

Will realised that he was drifting in his own thoughts when Hannibal's hand caressed the back of his neck. "Come back to me Will." Hannibal smiled as Will's eyes found his again. "More dreams?"

Will had told Hannibal almost everything of his recurring dreams about the knights and Hannibal found it amusing and apparently very cute, which Will in turn found slightly embarrassing. He didn't ever comment on it in a way that betrayed he was analysing Will, but

Will knew he was. He was analysing himself, he was smart enough to know these dreams were a way of his mind processing their new life and intimacy, the desires he had started to discover.

When Will answered with a smile, Hannibal changed the topic to the mundane. “We need groceries.” Hannibal told him, before giving him a quick kiss and slipping out from under him. Will lay in the empty but warm space Hannibal had left as he watched Hannibal select clothes from his wardrobe - nothing as ostentatious as his Baltimore wardrobe, but still smart, clean lines.

Domestic, was the word that popped into Will’s head as he watched him. He never thought he and Hannibal could be domestic and yet it was hard to imagine life a different way now. He never thought he could be domestic with anyone. He had created an amazing facade of it once before, enough to fool even Molly who thought she knew him so well. He had been happy to a degree and her happiness had been important, but it was never really real for him. At the time he wished it had. He wanted nothing more for it to work, but Hannibal’s return to his life made it clear it never would. Will could never be happy with someone unless they truly understood him, as Hannibal did.

His mind reeled back to the times before Hannibal ran to Europe, when he was trying to trap him by getting close, by giving him what he wanted. That was when he realised Hannibal had been right about him all along, he had started off thinking he would trap Hannibal but instead he began to find his true self and it scared him. He tried to convince himself for the longest time that he didn’t mean any of it, and yet he knew he did otherwise Hannibal would have seen through it. He had known he really meant it, that he wasn’t really pretending when Mason Verger cut off his own face. He’d have gladly killed that man, he took joy in what he was seeing. He had given Hannibal the decision and found that he wanted the doctor to kill Verger not to catch Hannibal but to see Verger dead. He had wanted to run to Europe with Hannibal but there was that hesitation - a fear of himself, but equally a fear of the unknown. A fear of what they would become together in the world.

“You told me once that you found peace in Florence and didn’t want to endanger that with murder. Is that how you feel now?” Will asked as Hannibal finished laying out his clothes for after his shower..

Hannibal stopped and looked at him with a slight frown of confusion. “A heavy question for so early in the morning.” He replied. When he looked back at the silent Will he must have realised that an answer was necessary. “You could say so.” he leaned over and took a kiss from Will’s lips. “I assume you feel the same?”

Will nodded silently. He had never thought of that side of Hannibal until they had caught him. He had never realised that Europe could have been a peace for them rather than anything he had imagined. He had never seen the grey between the black and white of presumed good and evil.

“If I had realised…” Will started but hesitated. Hannibal sat down on the bed next to him and looked at him intently. “If I had known we could be like this… That we could just, that we wouldn’t go straight to hunting...” he continued, fumbling over the words. “I think I would

have come with you, I think...I think that when you asked me to leave - forget Jack and Alana and just go. I think I would have." Will's eyes were down as he made the admission.

Hannibal hooked a finger under his chin and met his eyes with a gentle smile. "Don't have regrets Will, we can't dwell on the past. You needed time to discover and explore your new self, and I would rather we spent time now exploring and discovering each other." His lips twitched into a smirk. "We're here now. And we need groceries." Hannibal finished with a quick kiss on the tip of Will's nose before standing and pulling the bed sheets off Will. "Get dressed." He told him in good humour and then walked to the bathroom.

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Hannibal wasn't surprised by the morning's turn of conversation, such things were expected. Will was finally coming to terms with a lot of things, he was processing thoughts and feelings from his previous life that he needed to in order to move on in this one. Hannibal was happy for that to happen. Some of it might be difficult for Will, maybe even painful, but it was a necessary process that Hannibal was happy to support without allowing himself too much influence in it.

If anything the conversation had made him realise that his plans for the day were well timed. They rarely went into the town - usually Hannibal would go for groceries and Will would go for fishing supplies and the like. They had never been into the town together and Hannibal had a reason that they should do so on this day.

After breakfast he shrugged into his thick coat and waited for Will to do the same, the snow was thick on the ground outside and still falling lightly. Will kept giving him an odd look, a slightly suspicious look but didn't say anything. Hannibal found it hard not to smile at the looks. This was something he had wanted to do for a long time, but he knew the timing had to be right for Will, he had to be in the right place emotionally.

*

They parked in the lot for the grocery store and got out into the still falling snow. Hannibal was strangely quiet and seemed to be hiding something. Will wasn't worried, he trusted Hannibal implicitly, it was just odd. They walked to the store and bought a few groceries and took them back to the car, the whole time the only words between them were maddeningly polite back and forths about what to buy - unsure how to act now that they were in public together.

When Will went to get back in the car Hannibal stopped him. "We have some more things to get." He told Will and walked off. Will caught up with him and fell into step.

"What are you up to Hannibal?" He asked as they moved onto the busy main street. It was busiest Will had ever seen it, and with Christmas soon upon them he wasn't surprised. Hannibal only answered with a smile. The smile was abruptly wiped from his face as a larger man laden with bags hit into him and continued on with no word.

"Rude." Hannibal mumbled just loud enough for Will to hear. "Here we are." He said louder and pushed a door for a tatty shop front and let Will enter before him. Will wasn't really

looking at where he was going, he was too busy studying Hannibal after the comment he made.

“Be nice.” Will told him.

“I do sometimes wonder about throwing a dinner party…” Hannibal admitted, his irritation at the rudeness biting at him.

“A Christmas dinner party? Sounds lovely.” A woman’s voice interrupted them before Will could comment. She wore casual clothes with a grubby apron over the top.

“No… no dinner party.” Will said sternly and then turned to the woman with a smile. “He’s a terrible cook.” He told her with a smile which she returned. Will looked back at Hannibal who seemed to have completely lost his irritation and instead was trying to hide an involuntarily look of longing in response to Will’s teasing.

“You’re lucky my compassion for you makes me blind to your rudeness.” He told Will, who could see he was resisting the urge to reach for him physically.

Will smiled and looked back to the woman who was now making a polite show of not paying attention to the conversation in the small store. For a moment his concern had blinded him to his whereabouts and now the sounds, smells and noises began to encroach on his senses and he realised they were in a pet store - filled with dusty shelves of various pet accessories. Will looked at Hannibal curiously, a raised eyebrow. He had no idea what to even imagine.

“It’s nice to see you again Mr Alighieri, I’ve put aside everything you need, you might have to pull your car around.” She smiled at Hannibal, who returned her smile with a polite nod, Will standing between them tried to hide his confusion. Why would Hannibal be buying things from a pet store, what was he collecting?

The woman went off into a back room, evidently to collect the items she had referred to. As she opened the door he could hear the tell tale sounds of an animal shelter beyond. Will took the chance to look at Hannibal. “What’s going on?”

“I wanted to surprise you with a gift, an early Christmas present if you prefer.” Hannibal smiled. Will had never seen Hannibal smile so widely or genuinely. He followed Hannibal’s eyes as he nodded towards the woman returning from the back room with a bundle of fluff in her arms.

“This is the one you picked out, I just had him out for a bit of a groom, clipping his nails and such - want to make sure he’s nice and presentable.” She smiled and walked to Hannibal.

“Oh, no, for my friend.” he indicated Will and she turned direction, continuing her smile as she deposited the fluffy, slightly odd looking almost grown puppy in Will’s arms before heading once more to the back room. Will looked down and studied the small face - he was a border collie cross with two blue eyes staring out of a white face, and a slightly odd look. Not ugly, but an unsettling look from the piercing eyes and unidentifiable mixed heritage, as he looked up at him with the kind of immediate love a puppy gives. Hannibal had moved over to him and put his arm around Will’s shoulders looking down at the puppy also.

“I know your weakness for strays, his litter was brought in a few weeks ago, found abandoned off the highway. He is the only one left from the litter as the others were prettier. I felt he deserved a good home even if he is a little scruffy.” Hannibal smiled.

Will was lost for words. He looked from Hannibal to the puppy and back again. He had no words so he moved into Hannibal until he was close enough to steal a kiss, which Hannibal returned. They broke apart suddenly when they realised the woman had returned, carrying a dog bed full of accessories - bowls, a collar and leash, some toys. Will couldn’t help but redden, his cheeks and neck feeling suddenly very hot at being caught kissing Hannibal in public when he was only just getting used to it in private. Politely the woman gave no sign of having noticed and instead made conversation with Hannibal, who had now moved over to cash register, about the best type of puppy food to get.

Will looked down in his arms at the puppy who had now started to squirm, scaling his way up Will to his shoulder and laying sticky and slightly dog-breathed licks on the side of his face. Will smiled.

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By the evening, Hannibal had wondered if he had made the right decision. They had returned with a car full of dog food and accessories, the puppy in Will’s arms the whole way. Will had proceeded to spend hours doting on the puppy - playing with him, grooming him, finding places in the house for all the dog related items. Hannibal was already slightly jealous. He tried to shake it off, he knew this feeling was heightened by the fact that they had spent so much time together alone for so long over the last few months. He wasn’t sure he wanted to share Will, but had to keep reminding himself how ridiculous it was to be jealous of a dog.

“We need to name him.” Will said. He was sitting on the floor playing a game of tug with the puppy and one of his chew toys.

“He’s yours Will, you name him.” Hannibal smiled. He was surprised by the stern and annoyed look from Will, a hard look to pull off when playing with a fluffy puppy.

“He’s ours Hannibal.” He corrected. Hannibal let himself be corrected. There was something wonderful about Will saying anything was theirs. In response Hannibal found himself doing something he would never have dreamt of before meeting Will Graham. He sat on the floor next to Will and let the puppy climb over him. Will seemed just as surprised and gave the most amazing smile that made it more than worth it for Hannibal.

“Encephalitis?” Hannibal said with a smirk.

“What?”

“As a name.”

“That isn’t a name. And no.” Will looked at him sternly but seemed to be trying to ascertain whether Hannibal was serious, joking or making fun. Hannibal wasn’t sure himself.

“Bach?” Hannibal offered what he considered could be a sensible option.

“His Bach is worse than his bite?”

“That was terrible Will.” Hannibal shook his head.

“Why don’t we just go with something simple, like Max.”

“Not very imaginative.” Hannibal considered.

“What would you prefer? Vincent van Gogh? Not really the best way to keep a low profile. That Mr Alighieri calling for his dog Vincent van Gogh, don’t you think people might find it odd?” Hannibal knew Will wasn’t keen on the alias he had chosen and liked to remind him often. To Hannibal it was his way of trying to be humourous but also to snub his nose at the likes of those who would see him back behind bars. Will had gone with the more anonymous and much less dramatic, Jackson. Of course, Hannibal had shushed him and said he felt confident that no one in the town had read Dante, and they were already conspicuous enough with Hannibal probably being the only European they had ever met. His view was that they probably thought Alighieri was as common on the continent as Smith in the US. Will made it clear that he still felt he was being a little too blasé but there wasn’t really any telling Hannibal, especially when he found something vaguely amusing.

“Vincent. That is an acceptable name.” Hannibal smiled, ignoring Will’s comment.

Will looked down at the puppy and seemed to consider. Finally he nodded and smiled at Hannibal. “Ok, Vincent is good. I like it.” He leaned over and kissed Hannibal, the puppy scrambling between them for attention.

Hannibal pulled back. “Just one thing Will, he can’t sleep in the bedroom. He can have your room but he’s not sleeping in our room.” Hannibal said firmly. Will looked like he was about to protest but Hannibal cut him off. “Will, it is not negotiable. I don’t like an audience.” He leaned over and kissed Will again who protested neither the kiss nor the rule.

*

Will came to bed late but Hannibal was still up reading. He had put the puppy into the dog bed in his room, and had sat with him for a while. But the puppy, having already been apart from his litter mates, seemed independent and happy enough to be left on his own. Even so it had taken Will a while to pull himself away. He loved dogs, he missed having them around - they never expected anything other than food and love, so much easier to please than people. He had needed them in his old life, they were his escape from his job and from people. And now he had a puppy, given to him by the one person who understood why he surrounded himself with dogs rather than people. The one person that was the exception to this. In fact, he didn’t need dogs any more, but he did still love them - their company, especially when out walking or fishing. He knew he was going to enjoy that with Vincent, even more so if Hannibal came with them too.

He had popped to the shower before coming to bed, washing off the doggy smell and fluff, out of consideration for Hannibal and his sensitive nose. Hannibal seemed to appreciate this, or at least he appreciated a damp Will in a towel according to the look he gave. He set his book down and pulled the covers open on Will’s side.

Will smiled and dropped his towel into the hamper before getting into bed next to Hannibal.

“Thank you…” Will began, moving his body next to Hannibal’s and kissing his jaw.

“You don’t need to thank me Will.”

“I’d like to thank you…” Will moved his lips to Hannibal’s but Hannibal pulled back.

“I mean it Will. I wanted to do something for you, an early Christmas present. I don’t want you to do something in return because you feel you owe me something. I bought you Vincent because that’s who you are and I love you. Isn’t that what people do?”

Will reddened and felt his chest thumping. So many times Hannibal had said words that equated to love, and he knew he was in love with him, but he’d never been so clear before. Will’s mouth was dry as his mind reeled through a response. In the end his response was almost involuntary, completely instinctual - he leaned in and kissed Hannibal passionately. He felt Hannibal hesitate for a moment, perhaps worried that Will was ignoring the sentiment, but then he returned the kiss and pulled Will tight to him.

Hannibal’s hand trailed down Will’s back, resting on his ass and pulling him tight to him so that their bodies, both aroused, pressed completely together. Will hummed his pleasure into Hannibal’s mouth. Will ground his hips against Hannibal’s, knowing the friction was pleasurable for them both.

Hannibal pulled back and looked in Will’s eyes, Will knew he could see his hunger there. There was a flash of an image in his mind - something from his dream - Tristan and Galahad’s bodies arched together. He wondered if Hannibal could see it, so linked did they feel sometimes.

“Will…” Hannibal breathed his name, hesitant.

“Hannibal… I want…” he trailed off and bit his lower lip, not wanting to voice the desires that stole his confidence.

Another moment of hesitation and Hannibal rolled away, moving onto his side and reaching into the drawer by the side of his bed. He rolled back, handing a condom to Will, a tube of lubricant in his hand. Will took the condom and then took his turn to hesitate. He couldn’t deny that he desired to go further with Hannibal, as satisfied as he had been so far with hand jobs and blow jobs and general intimacy. He was still worried that his inexperience would let him down.

Hannibal put his hand over Will’s and smiled gently. Will leaned in and kissed him again, feeling like he was drawing strength from the confidence Hannibal always placed in him. As he pulled back Hannibal whispered "this is up to you Will." their eyes locked and Will knew Hannibal meant more than he was saying - he knew the choice was his, he could put the condom on himself or on Hannibal.

Another hesitation. His heart was thumping and he couldn't remember the last time he felt so nervous. He had become curious for either experience but felt a little crippled by his paranoia

over his potential inadequacy as a lover. Something he still hadn't felt comfortable in broaching with Hannibal.

Hannibal's voice was gentle "only if you want to..." It brought Will back from the verge of his hesitation, and after another moment's pause, he took the condom from its packaging and began to roll it onto his cock, his mouth dry with anxious anticipation. He fumbled slightly and suddenly Hannibal's hands were on his, steadying them and guiding them. Hannibal leaned in and kissed him gently. Will accepted the kiss but knew that through it Hannibal could feel his anxiety.

Hannibal drew back and smiled at him at him again, a hand moved up to Will's tousled hair. Will hadn't been sure what he might see in that smile - patronising amusement? But instead he found love. It was clear in Hannibal's eyes that there was nothing but love there in that moment. Will pressed his lips once more to Hannibal's as Hannibal palmed some lube and worked it up and down Will's sheathed cock.

Hannibal broke away again and handed the lube to Will before rolling back onto his side. Will took the invitation and pressed himself.against Hannibal's back, his lips against the Verger brand on his lover's taut back, trailing kisses as he moved up and his cock came to rest against Hannibal's ass.

"You'll need more lube Will." Hannibal all but whispered over his shoulder. "You'll need to put it on me." Will could hear the slight break in Hannibal's voice, and knew it to be anticipation. This seemed to forestall the hesitation Will had been close to and instead he squeezed out some of the lube and gently moved back, giving him enough room to touch Hannibal. Hannibal repositioned slightly, one leg pulled up on the bed, and then gave a combined gasp and sigh as Will's fingers began to work in the lube. First circling his anus and then slowly pushing one, then two fingers inside. Will took his cues from the pleasurable sounds Hannibal was making. He continued working his fingers into the warm tightness as Hannibal let out small moans.

"That's it Will." Hannibal's voice was a broken whisper of encouragement. Will could tell Hannibal was still holding back and knew instinctively it wasn't just about not hurting Will but also not scaring him. Hannibal was an intense person, and he seemed conscious of trying to ensure Will wasn't intimidated by that. Will was grateful, and realised Hannibal must have known about his anxiety over this for weeks and deliberately was trying to lessen that anxiety. Will's lips found the flesh of Hannibal's back, nipping, biting and kissing as Hannibal moaned.

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As Hannibal's body became tense with anticipation, whilst under Will's fingers his muscles relaxed, Will removed his fingers. Hannibal grunted as he did so, his broken voice straining as he tried to hold back the words for fear of pushing Will too far, scaring him off. But it was impossible - they broke through, heavily accented and thick "I need you to… please… fuck me Will."

Hannibal was pleased with the noise Will made in response. Something between a whimper and a moan, as Hannibal felt him move behind him. Hannibal bit down on his lower lip. It

had been a while, but he knew he was going to enjoy this more than he ever had in the past. That was the way everything had been with Will - from kissing to oral sex, with Will it was something beyond anything he'd ever experienced before. He knew the reason was love, though Will might find that corny. But Will was the only person on his level that he had ever revealed his true self to, that gave them a connection that made the idea of love seem banal. It was so much more, and he knew both of them had never had that before. It was love and it was beyond love - it was exquisite.

He let out a small cry of pleasure and pain as Will, hesitantly at first, pushed inside him. Hannibal felt his own cock throb and didn't dare touch it. The idea of Will inside him was almost enough in itself to make him cum.

"Yes…" He whispered to Will as his body arched into the penetration, encouraging him and letting him know he was doing just fine. More than fine, so much more that Hannibal couldn't even begin to form the words. Instead he reached a hand behind him, grabbing at Will's ass and pulling him tighter, wanting him deeper. Will reacted immediately, understanding the encouragement, and slowly pushing further inside until his cock was buried in Hannibal's ass. Hannibal let out a groan, the blissful pressure and the stimulation of his prostate made his eyes roll involuntarily.

Will seemed to take a cue from his moaning and pulled slowly back before gently thrusting in again. It was teasingly, exquisitely slow but Hannibal was glad of the pace, knowing that he was already so close to cumming that anything more would push him over the edge. From the laboured breaths and groans Will was expelling, he presumed the true to be same for him.

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Will grit his teeth as he slowly thrust into out of Hannibal's hot tightness. The combination of having anticipated this so long and the tight friction of his thrusting had Will already on the edge of cumming. He didn't want to disappoint Hannibal, but he wasn't sure how long he could last. It didn't help that his own thoughts of what he was doing, of his and Hannibal's bodies moving together was interspersed by images of the knights from his dream. His hand snaked round to grab Hannibal's chest, pulling them tight together as he continued to rock inside Hannibal. Hannibal's groans had turned to gasps and Will wondered if he were close too, the gasps seemed to coincide with some of Will's movements which he tried to concentrate on replicating, knowing this was stimulating for Hannibal. In turn both the movement and Hannibal's gasps were equally stimulating for him. He could already feel himself on the edge, so close he almost wanted to stop.

"Oh, fuck… Will…" Hannibal's words were barely audible, gasped out in barely discernable English. Will felt him buck against him and knew he had cum. He couldn't help but run his hand down from Hannibal's chest, to his stomach and groin, now wet and sticky with cum. In response Will instinctively thrust hard into his lover. It only took a few short thrusts before Will too came hard inside of Hannibal. Will cried out as he came and bit down on the flesh of Hannibal's shoulder to muffle himself, drawing an involuntary grunt from Hannibal.

They stayed still for a few long minutes, panting. Will's hand wet with Hannibal's cum, his lips pressed to Hannibal's neck. He could feel Hannibal completely relaxed, like jelly beside him. He'd never known him so still, his breath had slowed to almost nothing at all. Will

pulled back his softening cock slipping from Hannibal. He removed the condom and placed it on his nightstand for now so that he could ease Hannibal onto his back, a hand on his shoulder to guide him. Hannibal wasn't asleep but his eyes were closed and his face was serene. His eyes fluttered open as Will moved over him, chest to chest with Hannibal's cum between them, mixed with their mutual sweat.

Hannibal ran a hand up to Will's face, touched the now healed but still new scar on his cheek. Will turned his face to press a kiss to Hannibal's palm before he lay his head on Hannibal's chest. Despite the calm exterior, the stillness of him, Will could feel Hannibal's heart thumping in his chest as though it had never beat before that day.

"I love you too" Will whispered, sure he could hear Hannibal's heart skip as he said it.

Christmas Day

Chapter Summary

Hannibal lets Will plan Christmas Day - fluff turns to romance turns to Will becoming even more intimately acquainted with Hannibal

Chapter Notes

Final chapter on this one! Set on Christmas Day so popping it up for y'all now. As promised, roles are reversed (sexually). This is mostly fluff... I make no apologies.

Snow fell around the camp, lighter than it had been, but enough to keep adding to the already thick layer that surrounded the tents. They had been away from their post for a week, a patrol along the south side of the wall amongst a few villages that had been recently raided by interloping Woads. All had been reasonably quiet until they caught up with the raiders. It was a small group but they were determined and hungry - factors that made for good fighters. The knights had cut down half of them, the rest escaping back towards the wall.

They camped just north of the village to ward off any further intrusion, but it was likely the raiding party would give up or move on. Tomorrow the knights would move on too, trying to stay ahead of the raiders and cut down the rest if necessary.

Tristan was glad of the warmth the tent allowed, small enough not to fill with cool air, but big enough for both he and Galahad - another source of warmth to him. The fight had not been fierce today but even so they were both sore and bruised, a nick here and there. They lay naked beneath the furs of their bedding, warming each other through their aches.

Galahad lay on his back with Tristan nestled between his thighs, tracing his scars with a light finger. Wounds from previous combat between the new bruises. A finger trailed over the scar across his forehead, down to the scar on his cheek. it worked slowly across the scars on his shoulders and then down to the long scar across his belly. All the while Galahad held his breath whilst studying his lover’s face which was lined with concern over each old wound as though he felt personally responsible for each.

Galahad leaned up and stole a kiss from the lips that lingered only slightly above his own, pulling Tristan down to him. Tristan moved so that he was nestled tight between Galahad’s thighs. The younger man held his breath with anticipation, closing his eyes as he waited for what he wanted - for Tristan to be inside him.

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Hannibal woke with a start. He rarely woke from his dreams now. For a while he seemed to have gained this trait from Will after their escape. Will had escaped his nightmares and Hannibal had inherited them, dreaming almost nightly of having lost Will. But those nightmares had eased over time, leaving Hannibal as he replaced them with the knowledge that Will would be there every morning when he awoke - usually in each other's arms. But this was not a nightmare that had woken him, it was a dream of he and Will, or at least it seemed so.

Will had told him often of the dreams he had of the knights that seemed to be them. He knew Will dreamt of them more often than he disclosed. In many ways he was not surprised that the dreams reached him, he knew so much of them from Will that they must have settled in his mind too.

Hannibal lay still, on his back with Will curled up against him, as he considered what he had dreamt. He was aroused, almost painfully so, perhaps that was what had woken him because certainly it was no nightmare. His mind recalled tracing his fingers over Will's scars, only the barest hint in his thoughts that it was not he and Will.

Will stirred next to him and pulled himself closer as he awoke, pressing himself against Hannibal and raising a hand to rub the sleep from his eyes.

"Morning my beautiful Will." Hannibal smiled.

Will lifted himself on an elbow to look into Hannibal's eyes - something Hannibal would never tire of, knowing he was the only person in the world Will could stand sustained eye contact with.

"Your Will." He smiled and shook his head. "Well, I guess I can't argue with that." He kissed Hannibal. They hadn't easily come on pet names, they struggled to refer to each other in loving terms such as darling or dear one. Hannibal hadn't meant the words to slip from his mouth but was glad Will seemed receptive and not uncomfortable, they were each others after all and so it was merely a statement of fact.

Will pulled back and looked at him again. "Merry Christmas." He smiled before moving off and getting up from the bed. Hannibal knew he had been looking forward to this day for a couple of weeks. He had initially asked whether Hannibal would like to do something for Christmas, and if so what. Hannibal, not bothered by such things had left the planning of the day to Will. The most he did out of habit - as was more traditional in Europe - was cook a roasted Christmas dinner the night before, which they'd enjoyed and still had leftovers. But Christmas Day felt like a day for family and Will was his family so it only seemed right that Will decide the day's activities. Even so, Hannibal was a little hesitant as Will refused to divulge his plans for the day other than to say that Hannibal need not do anything, not even cook breakfast.

Will headed for the kitchen whilst Hannibal was still trying to gather his thoughts, the dreams intruding. They still flashed into his mind as he showered, he wondered how much more distracting his empathetic Will must have found such dreams as this, if this had been indeed

what he had experienced. For himself it had taken a lot of control to resist the urge to pin Will to the bed and satisfy his arousal. In the previous couple of weeks he had enjoyed several times the pleasure of Will inside him, but he always let his Will make the first move. Besides which, today was for Will and morning sex didn't currently appear to be on the schedule, sadly.

Before he had chance to head to the kitchen, Will met him at the top of the stairs with a cup of coffee in each hand. He passed one to Hannibal and took a sip of his as he returned to the bedroom.

"Time to get dressed." He told Hannibal as he set his coffee down and started pulling out clothes. "Wear something warm."

"Are we going out?" Hannibal asked, curious now as to what Will had planned for the day. Hannibal caught a slight scent and looked to the door, Vincent sat in the doorway. Will had a way with the pup and had already taught him a lot of obedience, which included not being allowed in their bedroom. The pup looked between he and Will, his head cocked to one side. He was used to them coming down for breakfast and was apparently aware of the change in routine.

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Will was grinning, he knew it. Even without the tight pull in the scar at his cheek, he knew it. He wasn't going to attempt to hide his enjoyment, even if Hannibal seemed a little wary. No more wary than he had been when they had gone on their shopping trip and ended up with Vincent.

Hannibal had taken Will's clothing suggestions, which he was sure he appreciated now that they trudged from the house through the thick snow. Despite the relatively short distance to the river, it took a while thanks to the hindrance of the snow. They did not speak the entire walk - a pleasant silence between them. Vincent ran back and forth between them and ahead and back, bounding excitedly in the snow. Will looked over at Hannibal and could see the look of curiosity on his face. Will had been gone much of the previous day preparing for today, and Hannibal had still not asked Will any questions, which was as Will had expected. He would consider prying into a secret to be rude.

Vincent barked excitedly as they approached the frozen river, running up to it but not daring to tread out onto the ice. Will scooped down and picked him up under one arm - a picnic basket already in the other - walking out onto the ice. Looking back he smiled at Hannibal "are you coming?"

He was pleased to see Hannibal's smile as he saw what Will had planned. It had taken some doing - waiting for the ice to get thick enough, coming out on his walks with Vincent over the last few day to erect the simple structure on the ice - a pleasant but light weight gazebo. Under the covering was a small garden settee and a low table, pillows and blankets a plenty piled in a large hamper ready to be extracted. To one side was a hole expertly cut in the ice and rods and tackle leaning against a makeshift wall.

Will set Vincent on the settee and placed the picnic basket onto the table. He looked back at Hannibal who was smiling gently as he made his way across the ice. A little less steady on the ice, Will held out a hand to him and guided him the last few steps, wondering if Hannibal deliberately slipped into his arms. Either way he allowed a gentle kiss before maneuvering Hannibal to the settee, where Vincent promptly hopped into his lap and settled, with no protest from Hannibal. Will knew he was still grinning, not just from the tension in his cheeks, but from the look on Hannibal's face.

"An interesting start to the day Will." Hannibal commented, patting Vincent's head as he pulled a blanket around them both.

"I love fishing." Was the only response Will could give, with a happy shrug. He wanted to say more but knew it didn't need to be said - he wanted Hannibal to share this with him. So far they had shared a lot of Hannibal's interests - Will had listened to his music, eaten his food, even helped him prepare it, been genuinely awed by his art. But he knew Hannibal getting him Vincent was his way of trying to encourage Will to be more himself, and there was nothing more himself than fishing with his dog.

That wasn't to say he had forgotten Hannibal in all of it, he wanted this to be something they enjoyed together. He opened the basket and took out a sandwich and passed it to Hannibal, watching with the same interest as Vincent as he opened it. Will had been to the town for the ingredients, and though it was still a poor impersonation of Hannibal's breakfasts, he hoped his lover would enjoy it. A gourmet sausage of boar and a whole host of herbs that Will couldn't begin to remember, on a light artisan baguette. Hannibal took in the scent of it before a delicate bite and a smile of appreciation. Will took his own sandwich and sat tight next to Hannibal on the small settee.

Through bites he looks at Hannibal. "I thought we could fish for our lunch."

"Lunch? Are we not having last night's leftovers?" Hannibal asked.

"They'll do fine for supper." Will smiled.

Will reached into the basket and pulled out a flask. Putting his sandwich to one side he poured out the dark liquid into two small cups and handed one to Hannibal. "It gets cold out here, you'll need this."

Hannibal took in the scent of the Irish coffee and smiled. Will leaned in and kissed him before standing and walking to the rods, taking them up and starting to bait them. "Eat your sandwich before Vincent forgets his manners." He tells Hannibal with a smile.

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The early morning hours are spent on the ice and Hannibal finds that it wasn't quite as cold as he might have anticipated. Huddled with Will and Vincent under blankets was surprisingly warming. Hannibal had never had much interest in fishing, but he had a great interest in watching Will enjoy things. Will told him stories of previous fishing trips he'd taken, Hannibal sat and listened with genuine interest. He was aware of Will's efforts to include him in his life and interests and couldn't help but be touched. It was true their friendship and now

relationship had often felt weighted towards Hannibal's interests. He had noticed that since his reassure to Will that he had not wanted to change him, and more so since buying him Vincent, that Will had been more happy to once again take up his interests - fishing, engine tinkering, dog walking. It didn't feel quite as weighted now, there had even been one occasion where Will had skipped an aria that Hannibal had been listening to, declaring that he disliked that one. Once he had done so he had glanced at Hannibal with a look of tentative apology but Hannibal had only been able to smile and move quickly to Will to kiss his sweet mouth. He wanted them to be equal in everything, they way they had been equal when they had killed Dolarhyde together. He was eager to experience everything Will had planned for the day - he wanted to take hold tightly of everything Will wanted to share.

When they returned to the house Hannibal was surprised to find that it smelled delicious. Will went immediately to the kitchen and dropped the three fish they had caught, into the sink, before heading to the bread maker that Hannibal had no idea he knew how to operate. Their trip to the river was obviously scheduled around the cooking time. Hannibal watched Will as he turned the heat on the stove under a couple of pans he appeared to have already prepared before they had left to go fishing. Hannibal found his mouth watering and wasn't sure if it was for the food or Will.

"Don't look at me like that. I'm not on the menu." Will grinned at him.

Hannibal smiled and yet found a tight tug within him. He had told Will not to have any regrets, that they shouldn't dwell on things past. He knew he could be irrational, and he struggled not to regret that. He remembered what seemed like a much younger Will now, coming to his house with a need to talk about kissing Alana. That had perhaps been the day that he realised the depth of his affections for Will. It was certainly the first time he had felt jealous - jealous enough to take Alana as his own lover to keep her from Will. But that was the least rash thing he had done, the rash thing he had done was to immediately confess his knowledge of Tobias Budge. The words had fallen from his mouth before he could take them back. He had to wait as events unfolded, his own taking of Budge's life, his relief that Will had not been killed. He remembered the relief warmly but regretted the situation he had created. And of course, the time he felt betrayed by Will and had started to saw into his head… He knew with retrospect he would have always regretted that and was glad he had been stopped. The thought of Will being on the menu stabbed at him, he had known for sometime that Will's death would be his own end, and he desired neither. Will's especially, he realised.

"Out…" Will was shoo-ing at him with a dishcloth.

"Are you sure I can't help?" Hannibal replied. He didn't want Will to have no help, but he also couldn't help a little anguish at the loss of control in an arena he considered his domain.

"Believe it or not Hannibal, I can cook." Will's voice was light and an eyebrow was cocked but Hannibal was sure he was trying to mask some annoyance. In return Hannibal took his leave and went to the living room. Vincent wagged along with him, and Hannibal looked down at the puppy. Their pup. He had to keep reminding himself. He had never been fond of pets - he was perfectly fine with animals - but pets in a household created a sort of unpredictable chaos that hadn't suited his lifestyle. Of course, that had been when he was

trying to make his way through life in the human suit he no longer needed to bother with. He knew for Will's sake he would need to make every effort to bring Vincent with them when the time came to move on. He leaned down and petted Vincent's head, much to the dog's apparent delight. He let out a low chuckle, thinking for a moment that he had much the same reaction when Will petted him, though he hid it much better than Vincent did.

Hannibal turned on music and began setting two places at their small table, a shadow of the one he had in Baltimore, but enough for the two of them. When he had finished Will had entered the room.

"It'll be a little while longer." He told Hannibal. Hannibal nodded and walked over to him before he could head back into the kitchen. He snaked his arms around Will's waist and pulled him close.

"This is lovely Will." He went to kiss Will, but Will pulled back with a smile.

"The day isn't over yet." He said before giving Hannibal the kiss he had sought. Will pulled out of his arms and started out of the room again. He returned a few minutes later with some blankets and pillows, and piled them in front of the fire, before rearranging them. Setting them out to sit on, Hannibal realised. He went over to help but was shooed again.

"You can light the fire." Will told him as he went back to the kitchen. Hannibal did as instructed with a curious smile on his lips.

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Will was pretty pleased with the meal he had cooked. To be fair, he didn't think you could go far wrong with courtbouillon, but it was the first time he'd really had chance to cook for Hannibal - it being his thing. Will didn't mind, if he's been left to cook he'd be eating basic rations most of the time but maybe the occasional comfort food like this. So he couldn't argue that Hannibal wanted to keep plying him with gourmet cuisine.

He had explained how this was a common dish in his house growing up. Hannibal made the requisite noises to suggest that he enjoyed the meal too, mentioning how it was flavoured to perfection. Will was sure Hannibal had tasted much better food in his life, but he was equally sure he enjoyed it. Hannibal insisted on clearing the dishes and then returned very quietly, almost sneaking up on Will, to surprise him with a kiss.

"Thank you Will." Hannibal said with great and obvious feeling before kissing Will again.

Whilst they kissed Will rose to his feet, wrapping his arms around Hannibal and pulling him close. He was surprised how pleasurable it had been to cook for Hannibal, it hadn't been as nerve wracking as he thought it might be. Not today anyway, a day that had been designated for him. He had wanted to use that to change things up a bit - get Hannibal to come fishing, get Hannibal to let him cook. He was surprised that Hannibal had gone along with it all so willingly, in fact he seemed to enjoy it. And Will enjoyed the way Hannibal had looked at him all day, from telling boring old fishing stories, to sharing their Christmas lunch - he had never looked at him with such adoration.

When they finally broke apart, Hannibal was grinning. Will might have called it delirium and he knew the feeling. He knew Hannibal's grin was mirrored in his own face. He had only hoped to know happiness like this in the past. His mind felt lighter, he felt less haunted.

"What do you have planned next my sweet Will?" Hannibal's accent was thick as though he had been drinking heavily. But on the little wine they'd had with their food, Will was sure he was drunk on something else entirely. The thought made him feel stupid, corny, and then he felt himself redden. He could see Hannibal noticed, and it was clear that Hannibal knew it was a reaction to Hannibal's words - or rather the way he had said them. Dripping with love and desire.

"I thought we'd read." Will smiled as he moved away from Hannibal, waiting for his flushed face to cool. "You like to read in the afternoons."

"I do." Hannibal agreed. "But I wanted you to set the plans for today, I don't want you to do cater to my interests." Hannibal objected.

"I want you to read to me." Will said, reaching for Hannibal's hand and leading him to the fire. "Sit." He told Hannibal. Hannibal obliged, taking a seat on the blankets and cushions that Will had arranged by the fire. Will looked down with a smile. Hannibal settled on the floor, propping himself comfortably, just as Will had pictured.

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Hannibal waited on the floor as Will went to retrieve something, a book he presumed. He made himself comfortable, and it was surprisingly comfortable. He leaned back into the nest Will had built and let his eyes close as he listened to the crackle of the fire. In his mind he couldn't help but see an image of the knights from his dream, this seemed like something they might do - curl up together in front of a fire.

He opened his eyes when he heard Will return and drop down beside him. Will handed him a book, it wasn't wrapped but it had a bow on it. They hadn't really talked about whether they would give gifts or not, Hannibal wasn't sure if Vincent was all the gift he need provide. And he needed nothing from Will, he had everything he could ever want from him and that was something that was not easily gift-wrapped.

"You shouldn't have Will, I didn't…" Hannibal started but Will stopped him.

"I guess it's more for both of us. I saw it in town a while ago and I wanted to read it… Well, I thought maybe I'd like you to read it to me…" Will seemed a little bashful as he lay down at an angle to Hannibal, laying on his back and placing his head on Hannibal's thigh. Hannibal turned the book over as Will got comfortable, and read the title. It was an antique, a beautifully bound copy of tales of the Knights of the Round Table.

Hannibal smiled. "You still dream about them?" He asked, curious. Will only spoke of his dreams occasionally, and he knew he held much back and Hannibal would never push or pry.

Will nodded against his leg. Hannibal decided not to start at the beginning but to find a story of Galahad, who Will had so reminded him of in his dream. He noticed the small smile on

Will's lips as he closed his eyes and listened. After a while Hannibal stopped and closed the book, thoughtfully. Will opened his eyes and looked up at Hannibal.

"Is this something you imagine they might do?" Hannibal asked, looking into the fire and running his hand into Will's soft locks. "It is something I imagine they would do."

"I can imagine them doing a great many things." Will answered, his voice distant with thought.

Hannibal set the book down and leaned over Will, placing a gentle kiss on his lips.
"I think your dreams are invading mine Will, I saw your knights last night." He smiled.

Will gave him a curious look and sat himself up to face Hannibal. "Ha, maybe we've been spending too much time together. Or perhaps their repressed memories of a previous life." Will joked.

"There are some psychiatrists that might subscribe to a theory of reincarnation." Hannibal considered, not sure if he wasn't entirely just teasing Will.

"What happened in your dream?" Will asked with keen interest. He shifted himself so he was propping himself over the reclined Hannibal.

"Fighting, tending to wounds… loving…" Hannibal chose his words carefully and allowed his eyes to close as Will drew closer and gently kissed him.

"Were they like us?" Will asked as he moved back.

"The resemblance was striking." Hannibal recalled, his eyes still closed as his mind brought up the image of Galahad, a little younger than Will - bright eyes full of adoration. A mop of curly hair that was perhaps how Will's would look if grown out. A neatly trimmed beard. A firm and beautiful body. Hannibal felt an involuntary twitch in his groin.

"Do you ever wonder what it means? What if they really were us?" Will asked, Hannibal could sense the genuine curiosity.

"If the dream were real? The people were real? Maybe it means we will always find each other Will. If we have lived before and found each other, it warms me to know that if we live again we might find each other again." Hannibal smiled.

Will stared at him in silence and Hannibal smiled. Will didn't return the smile but continued to look thoughtful, finally pulling back and getting to his feet.

"Will?" Hannibal sat forward and watched as Will left the room. "Will, what…" He was unsure whether to go after his lover. He wanted to, but he had also been respectful of the distance Will sometimes needed to put between them. Although it was becoming less as the weeks rolled on, he knew Will sometimes needed time with his own thoughts. He wasn't sure what he had said that might have caused Will distress, but he didn't want to make it worse by causing an unwelcome intrusion. He lay back on the pillows and blankets and sighed, closing

his eyes and pinching the bridge of his nose reminding himself that Will still needed his time and space.

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Will sat on their bed. Theirs. His palms were clammy and his mind was racing with images from his dreams. It was silly to think it could be them, it was a legend, not history - even if they were to believe in reincarnation. But that wasn't to say that the dreams hadn't been enjoyable, informative, even educational. As he thought about the two knights together he had had to take a break from the romance of the day. He hadn't really planned it to be romantic, he hadn't not either. It had just been what he thought they might enjoy together and to share some of his interests with Hannibal and make a day for both of them. He hadn't really planned much further than that, but now he found himself sitting on their bed and staring at Hannibal's bedside table. He pulled the drawer open, feeling a little intrusive - ignoring the few nicnacs and items in there other than the pack of condoms and little bottle of lube. His heart raced a little as he took them out.

He really hadn't known where the day would lead, he hadn't planned for any of this, but talk of the knights, Hannibal's words. The idea of Hannibal dreaming of the knights too, perhaps seeing the things he had made him feel a little exposed, but at the same time strangely at peace. It felt like now was the time to just give into his thoughts, forget his anxiety and lack of confidence. Allow himself to be guided by Hannibal. It was something he wanted, and he knew Hannibal did too even if he'd never say it for fear of scaring Will off.

He was already descending the stairs, items in hand, as these thoughts went through his mind. Hannibal didn't look up and he wondered if he had fallen asleep. Will dropped down next to him in front of the fire and leaned in with a gentle kiss. Hannibal smiled but his eyes stayed closed.

"If I open my eyes will you be there Will?" He said through the smile.

Will didn't answer, he smoothed some stray hair from Hannibal's forehead - now growing back out after his time locked up. He let his hand drop to Hannibal's chest, running down the soft cashmere sweater, and then further, finding the buckle of his belt. At this Hannibal opened his eyes but didn't lose the smile. His hand came up to Will's hair and lost itself in his short curls.

"I was worried I had scared you away." Hannibal sounded relieved.

Will sat back on his haunches and looked at the man who had become his lover. "Many times, but not recently." Will grinned. "I… it felt like things were getting a little… romantic." Will struggled with the word, fearing it would sound corny, he quickly spoke on "I thought… I felt. I wanted to…" His words ran out but at least his confidence didn't. He just didn't have the words to voice his feelings without sounding crass or corny, in his mind at least.

Hannibal's smile demonstrated that he understood. The older man pulled him into a kiss, rising from his reclined position so that he could begin pulling Will's sweater over his head, briefly breaking the kiss. They continued on this way, kisses only interrupted when another item of clothing was divested until they were both naked on the blankets in front of the fire.

Will's breath was thick, his skin prickled with anticipation and his cock was heavy. He leaned into Hannibal, pressing their foreheads together as he spoke softly. "Will you teach me?".

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Hannibal felt his chest tighten - anticipation, love, apprehension. He felt for a moment like he might burst. He found himself suddenly as nervous as Will had clearly been over their sexual explorations. He was happy as things were and couldn't help but be worried that doing this, if Will didn't like it, it might change things between them.

He looked deeply into Will's eyes, that seemed a drowning pool in that moment, and was about to ask if he was sure before his lover captured his lips again. A fierce and passionate kiss that took Hannibal's breath.

Will broke them apart and found his eyes again. "Please?" He asked Hannibal, who felt powerless to refuse Will anything.

Hannibal licked his lips and realised how dry his mouth was. He gave a nod and enjoyed the almost shy smile that Will returned.

They had had sex enough for him to know that Will understood the fundamentals, but it was quite different for him to experience it himself. Hannibal could recall the previous times he had been on both sides of this sexual exploration, even the first time he had been penetrated. But he was a different person to Will, he had always known his own mind sexually, but this was all new to Will - from thoughts to actions. He found he was both aroused and endeared by Will wanting to explore this further.

He found his lover waiting in anticipation as he came back from his thoughts. He would be Will's mentor in this as he had been in other things, come what may. He kissed Will again and moved forward, pushing Will onto his back and pressing himself to the younger man's side.

"You must tell me if you want to stop at any time. It is ok if you want to stop Will." He looked intently in Will's eyes which now seemed to be a raging storm. Will nodded, his teeth pressing into his lower lip.

Hannibal picked up the lube and squeezed some into his hand before pressing closer to Will's side, lowering his lips to kiss Will's neck and collarbone. As he did so he lowered his fingers to Will's warm tightness and circled them there. Will jumped at the touch and Hannibal stopped.

"It's cold." Will said, letting out a nervous laugh.

"It will get very warm soon." Hannibal smiled, lacing kisses up Will's neck as he let his fingers move on instinct. He pushed two fingers back to Will's hole, circling around as he spread the lube. He was aware of every hitched breath from Will, could feel the tightness in his neck where he was taut with anticipation. Hannibal continued his ministrations, fingering him gently and allowing Will to relax into the motion.

“It’s… different…” Will commented, his breathing heavy but relaxed. Hannibal smiled against his skin, glad that Will’s anxiety seemed to morph into an open curiosity. He continued for a minute more before slipping a finger inside his lover. Will’s breath caught but he didn’t tense up. He worked the tightness before he moved a second finger in and felt a slight tense as Will let out a deep breath he had been holding.

“Are you comfortable Will?” Hannibal asked, lifting his lips slightly from his lover’s now clammy skin. Will nodded, although he bit his lower lip again he relaxed. Slowly, Hannibal curled his fingers, glancing over Will’s prostate. Will’s body jolted and he gasped sharply. Hannibal started to use his fingers to slowly stretch Will, his fingers occasionally wandering to lightly caress his prostate. Will’s quiet gasping finally broken with a moan.

“Also different?” Hannibal smiled against the skin he was still layering with kisses.

Will nodded emphatically through sharp breaths and moans.

“It's… it feels good.” Will’s tone betrayed his surprise.

“Do you want more?” Hannibal’s voice was thick with gentle seduction as his fingers moved skillfully. Will nodded as he bit his lower lip again.

*

As Hannibal moved away from him Will felt suddenly empty but relieved at the same time. Just as ever Hannibal’s actions had been both pleasure and pain, it was both a relief and a loss. As moments passed the loss was felt keenly.

Will swung an arm over his eyes and tried to steady his breathing from the panting it had become. He heard Hannibal opening the condom packet and moving around, but didn’t look. He could see Hannibal in his mind as he settled between his legs and pulled himself over Will’s body. He felt Hannibal’s lips ghost over his.

He wasn’t tense, he found he was surprisingly relaxed, but his breath started to catch in his throat as he waiting with anticipation for Hannibal. Hannibal’s lips met his neck, trailing down to his chest, his hands on Will’s thighs. This was like being an inexperienced teenager again, Will reflected again, glad that it was Hannibal who would be his guide through it.

“Fuck!” Will cried out as Hannibal entered him. He wasn’t sure what he had expected but he knew he hadn’t quite been prepared for it. There was pain but it was also pleasurable, as with everything with Hannibal, it was intense.

Hannibal stilled within him, moving over him so he could kiss Will’s lips, which Will gratefully accepted, enjoying their gentleness. So very gently Hannibal began to move again. He and Hannibal had had sex several times in the recent weeks, a few different positions and this was the one Will had enjoyed the most when their positions had been reversed. It allowed them to be intimate with each other, he knew the friction of their bodies pressed together had also been enjoyable for Hannibal with his cock trapped between them. He could understand now as Hannibal pressed against him, and in him, his arms either side of his head - he was all around him and Will didn’t want to be anywhere else.

Will started to relax into it as Hannibal moved slowly, lacing kisses along his jaw. Will moved his arm from his face and looked up into Hannibal's storm dark eyes. Hannibal smiled down at Will before leaning in for a kiss. Will wrapped his arms up and around Hannibal as he continued to move, a little deeper with each gentle thrust. Will tensed now and then before relaxing again, silently looking into Hannibal's eyes, and falling into the intensity behind them. His head lolled back as Hannibal found his prostate. The shock of pleasure ran through him and he gasped. Hannibal nipped kisses at Will's exposed throat as he continued to move - focusing on the pleasure he had just sparked.

Will groaned and wrapped his legs around Hannibal's waist, pulling him deeper - wanting him deeper. He wanted to be so completely part of Hannibal. And Hannibal complied, his thrusting became harder, deeper, quicker. Will let out involuntary moans and gasps as his hands grasped at Hannibal trying to hold him close, bring him closer so they were one.

"I love you Will." Hannibal's voice was a whisper next to his ear. Will couldn't respond, his throat dry, but he nodded and sought Hannibal's lips. He bit at them and plundered them as Hannibal thrust into him. Their bodies rocked together in unison and Will struggled to breath, crushed under Hannibal, his cock caught between them. Friction and pleasure and pain tearing through him. A blaze of white.

His cum shot between them, sticky and wet as Hannibal continued to thrust to his own end. Hannibal tensed over him, crying out as he came, looking down into Will's eyes. Will held his gaze, brought his hands up to Hannibal's face and held him there. They stayed entwined as he brought Hannibal's lips gently to his. He panted against the bruised lips "I love you."

*

At some point they had moved. When they had come down from the bliss, they had curled around each other by the fire, uncaring of the mess. They had stayed there, intermittently talking, kissing, sleeping, until the embers died down. At some point Vincent, who had been noticeably scarce whilst his masters made troubling noises, came to lay at their feet by the fire.

Hannibal had seen something in Will the moment they had met, and even with all the imagination in the world he would never have seen it end this way. As time had rolled on he had fantasised it might, but still never presumed it would. He never knew he could find such peace and happiness out of all the darkness in his life.
He looked at Will's peaceful face as he snored gently. He stroked a lock back from Will's forehead and took in the scar he had placed there. A darker moment, a darker time. He knew in that moment no one would ever hurt Will again, not even himself.

He may have not seen the future back then, but he knew it for certain now. They would live like this, could live like this while Will came to terms with himself, no matter how long that took. He could give Will the stability he needed, the home he craved. If it took a life time Hannibal would wait. But when Will was ready to fully embrace the darkness within himself, Hannibal would be there at his side. A guide, a partner - they would hunt together and love together. When Will was ready.

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